

Public Opinion and Voting Behavior (Spring 2007)

Chinese Title : 民意與投票行為研究 (952)

Instructor: Frank Cheng-shan Liu

Class Time: M 1:10 ~ 4:00pm

Classroom : 社3008

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Office Hours : W 1-3pm or by appointment

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Course Description

The keyword of this class is RESEARCH. A good research requires a solid understanding of the classic works and a good skill of conducting literature review. This course is designed to help students who are interested in micro-level politics to build up these abilities. It will not, however, cover comprehensively all topics about opinion and voting behavior; instead, it will focus on the classical theories about voters. As a theory- and research-oriented class, it highlights common characters of voters in general. (Students who are interested in cross-regional comparison about voting behavior may take other courses, such as Political Communication, or Theories of Comparative Politics). Some research works about Taiwanese voters will be provided, but note that most pieces of research are based on American context and findings by American political scientists. Students are *required* to read carefully the classics (books that have been cited or heavily discussed over the past two to four decades) and are encouraged to express their disagreement about these theories. The topics addressed in this class include belief system, the formation of voter preferences, party identification, and social network effects. Students are expected to be *well prepared* for in-class based on the given reading materials and to write two papers related to these subjects.

Course Texts and Readings

The course requires a few books and a pack of journal articles. The content and required readings are subject to change during the semester.

Grading Policy

Requirement	% of Grade
Class Participation	20
Review Essay	30
Research paper	40
Oral Presentation	10
Total	100

- Class participation (20%): involvement in class discussion will reflect your preparation for the class. Credits are given based on your attendance, raising questions, responding to questions, and leading discussion. Assigned readings should be completed *before* the class.
- Review Essay (30%): You should choose a topic for your term paper (topics related to the subjects listed below or any other topic related to the class) and compose a literature review. The review should be based on 5 to 10 journal articles or books related to the assign books. Newspaper, magazine, and online materials do not count.
- Research paper and oral presentation (40%, 10%): Your research paper should be a semester-long project and the topic you choose must be related to one of the subjects listed in this syllabus. You will need

my consent if you want to write something beyond the scope of this class. You can extend your mid-term review essay into a term paper, but there is no need to ask for a topic change if you want to start over. Your research paper should be about 15 pages (double-spaced) in English, or 10,000 words or 25 pages in Chinese. You should cite at least 5 journal articles (published in these 5 years). Use the APA style to format your paper.

- Note that I do not give “I” for incomplete works. Make sure you turn in the papers before the deadlines. The cover page of papers should include the following information: class name, author’s full name and student id, paper type (mid-term paper or final term paper), turn-in date, and contact information.

Weekly Schedule

Part I: Opinion Formation and Party Identification

1. [March 7] Introduction to the Class

- In Class: a discussion about the requirement of the class, the purpose of empirical research, and the importance and the role of theory development in academic enterprise.

2. [March 14] Selective Perception

- Before Class:
 - Klapper, J.T. (1960). *The effects of mass communication*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press. *Read Part I (esp. Chapters 2, 3, and 4).*
- Supplemental:
 - Beck, P.A. (2002). Encouraging political defection: The role of personal discussion networks in partisan desertions to the opposition party and Perot votes in 1992. *Political Behavior*, 24 (4), 309-337.
 - Oliver, M.B. (2002). Individual differences in media effects. *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*. Bryant, J. & Zillmann, D.(Eds.) 507-524. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- In Class: also talk about how to do literature review and how to use SSCI and JabRef to manage your references.

3. [March 21] Belief Systems

- Before Class:
 - Converse, P. (1964). The nature of belief systems in mass public. *Ideology and Discontent*. Apter, D.(Ed.) 206-61. New York: Free Press.
- Supplemental:
 - Chong, D. (1996). Creating common frames of reference on political issues. *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*. Mutz, D. C.; Sniderman, P. M. & Brody, R. A.(Eds.) 195-224. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

4. [March 28] The Origin of Voter Preferences

- Before Class:
 - Zaller, J. (1992). *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Read the whole book.

5. [April 4] Michigan School and the Study on Party Identification

- Before Class:
 - Campbell, A.; Converse, P.; Miller, W. & Stock, D. (1960). *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley.
- Supplemental:
 - Carsey, T.M. & Layman, G.C. (2006). Changing sides or changing minds? Party identification and policy preferences in the American electorate. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50 (2) , 464-477.

6. [April 11] No Class

- Note: April 11 is a campus-wide day off; start to work on your mid-term paper.

7. [April 18] The Independent

- Before Class:
 - Carmines, E.G. & Stimson, J.A. (1981). Issue Evolution, Population Replacement, and Normal Partisan Change. *The American Political Science Review*, 75 (1), 107-118.
 - Kamieniecki, S. (1988). The Dimensionality of Partisan Strength and Political Independence. *Political Behavior*, 10 (4), 364-376.
- I will be attending the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) Annual Conference in Chicago. The class will be rescheduled.

Part II: Other People's Influence

8. [April 25] Revisit the Columbia School

- Before Class:
 - Lazarsfeld, P.F.; Berelson, B. & Gaudet, H. (1944). *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce.
- Supplemental:
 - Beck, P.A.; Dalton, R.J.; Greene, S. & Huckfeldt, R. (2002). The social calculus of voting: Interpersonal, media, and organizational influences on presidential choices. *American Political Science Review*, 96 (1), 57-73.
 - Liu, F.C. (2006). Communication Networks and Changes in Electoral Choices: A Study of Taiwan's 2002 Mayoral Elections. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 6 (1), 139-158.
 - Lin, T.M.; Wu, C.E. & Lee, F.Y. (2006). "Neighborhood" influence on the formation of national identity in Taiwan: Spatial regression with disjoint neighborhoods. *Political Research Quarterly*, 59 (1), 35-46.
- In Class: Turn in your mid-term paper before class starts.

9. [May 2] Communication Networks

- Before Class:
 - Huckfeldt, R. & Sprague, J.D. (1995). *Citizens, politics, and social communication: Information and influence in an election campaign*. Cambridge University Press.
- Supplemental:

- Scheufele, D.A.; Hardy, B.W.; Brossard, D.; Waismel-Manor, I.S. & Nisbet, E. (2006). Democracy based on difference: Examining the links between structural heterogeneity, heterogeneity of discussion networks, and democratic citizenship. *Journal of Communication*, 56 (4), 728-753.
- Huckfeldt, R.; Johnson, P.E. & Sprague, J.D. (2004). *Political Disagreement: The Survival of Diverse Opinions within Communication Networks*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Skip Chapters 6 & 7).

10. [May 9] Opinion Leaders

- Before Class:
 - Katz, E. (1957). The two-step flow of communication: An up-to-date report on an hypothesis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 21 (3), 61-78.
 - Roch, C.H. (2005). The dual roots of opinion leadership. *Journal of Politics*, 67 (1), 110-131
- Supplemental:
 - Lazarsfeld, P.F.; Berelson, B. & Gaudet, H. (1968). *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. New York, Columbia University Press.
 - Robinson, J.P. (1976). Interpersonal influence in election campaigns: Two-step flow hypotheses. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 40 304-319

Part III: Voting Behavior & Survey Issues

11., 12., & 13. [May 16, 23, 30] Ambivalence and Voting Behavior

- Before Class:
 - Downs, A. (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper.
 - Schlozman, K.L. (2002). Citizen participation in America: What do we know? Why do we care?. 433-461. W.W. Norton ; American Political Science Association.
 - Meffert, M.F.; Guge, M. & Lodge, M. (2004). Good, bad, and ambivalent: The consequences of multidimensional political attitudes. *Studies In Public Opinion: Attitudes, Nonattitudes, Measurement Error, and Change*. 63-92. Princeton University Press.
 - Huckfeldt, R.; Mendez, J.M. & Osborn, T. (2004). Disagreement, ambivalence, and engagement: The political consequences of heterogeneous networks. *Political Psychology*, 25 (1), 65-95.
- Supplemental:
 - McGraw, K.M.; Hasecke, E. & Conger, K. (2003). Ambivalence, uncertainty, and processes of candidate evaluation. *Political Psychology*, 24 (3), 421-448.
 - Howard, L. (2001). The electoral consequences of ambivalence toward presidential candidates. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45 (4), 915-929.
 - Mutz, D.C. (2006). *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative Versus Participatory Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Note: I am attending the International Communication Association (ICA) conference in the week of May 23; the class of that week may be rescheduled.

14. [June 6] Survey Research and Its Limits

- Before Class:
 - Brady, H. E. (2000). Contributions of Survey Research to Political Science. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 33 (1), 47-57.
 - Neijens, P. (2004). Coping with the non-attitudes phenomenon: A survey research approach. *Studies in Public Opinion: Attitudes, Non-attitudes, Measurement Error, and Change*. 295-313. Princeton University Press.

- Supplemental:

- Capturing Campaign Dynamics, 2000 And 2004: The National Annenberg Election Survey. Romer, D.; Jamieson, K. H. & Winneg, K. K. A. C.(Eds.) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania. Read Chapter 2 and sk

15. [June 13] A Controversy about Survey and Polling

- Before Class:

- Fishkin, J.S. (1995). The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Weissberg, R. (2002). Polling, policy, and public opinion: The case against heeding the "voice of the people". New York : Palgrave.

- In Class: A debate about the Fishkin's work

16. & 17. [June 20 & 27] Concluding Remarks & Student Oral Presentation

- In Class: paper due in class (June 27)